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ABSTRACT

This bulletin is designed to shed light on successful strategies for reintegrating youth from juvenile justice system settings into the educational mainstream and to guide youth-serving professionals toward promising programs, practices, and resources. The Intensive Aftercare Program, funded by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention in 1988, serves serious, habitual offenders who are not likely to return to mainstream educational systems. Nevertheless, the theoretical approaches identified by this model are suitable for the reintegration of juvenile offenders into transitional educational settings. In particular, the model's emphasis on ongoing services and supervision while youth are incarcerated and when they return to their communities also applies to their transition from confinement to school settings. Both effective programs within correctional institutions and transitional support on leaving confinement are necessary. New Jersey's Gateway Academy is an example of a program that manages transitions for students returning to mainstream education. Transitional educational placement in alternative schools can offer environments that gradually reduce the level of supervision and support youths were accustomed to receiving while incarcerated. Arizona's Pathfinder Project provides this type of transitional placement. Many students do not have programs like these available to them, but their re-entry into the educational system can be smoothed with pre-release information sharing and visits, counseling, and curricular and disciplinary policies that support the reintegration of the student into the school system. Establishing partnerships between juvenile probation departments and schools is another innovative approach to effective intervention with young offenders. The Allentown School District, Pennsylvania, provides an example of a school-based probation program. Foremost among all of the strategies for helping delinquent youth re-enter the education mainstream is open communication among agencies and other entities involved in helping these students. (Contains 23 endnotes.) (SLD)

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Shay Bilchik, Administrator
February 2000
JUVENILE JUSTICE BULLETIN

From the Courthouse to the Schoolhouse: Making Successful Transitions

Ronald D. Stephens and June Lane Arnette

This Bulletin is one of a series of OJJDP Bulletins focusing on both promising and effective programs and innovative strategies to reach Youth Out of the Education Mainstream (YOEM). YOEM is a joint program initiative of the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program, U.S. Department of Education. The YOEM initiative focuses on at-risk youth who are truant, dropouts, fearful of attending school, suspended or expelled, or in need of help reintegrating into mainstream schools from juvenile detention and correctional settings. Each Bulletin in this series highlights one or more of these five separate but often related categories of problems that cause youth to forsake their education and thus place themselves at risk of delinquency.

> "... We should rightfully have the power to arrest all these little beggars, loafers, and vagabonds that infest our city, take them from the streets and place them in schools where they are compelled to receive education and learn moral principles."
>
> —Chicago Board of Education, *44th Annual Report*, 1898

It has been over a century since the Chicago Board of Education released its now-infamous edict to arrest disruptive youth and put them in schools where they would be compelled to learn and become responsible citizens. The Chicago Board of Education understood that when young people were not in school, they were often out in the community committing delinquent acts. The Board also recognized that schooling was a key to crime prevention. While the Board's theory sounds simple enough, the process it implies is complex and is filled with both opportunities and risks.

With the approach of a new century, a new priority has emerged for schools to play a major role in the transition of young offenders from confinement within a juvenile justice setting to life in the community. Schools are being asked to shoulder the dual responsibility of preventing juvenile crime and developing a responsible citizenry. The public believes that school is the right place for young people to be if they are to stay away from trouble and focus on learning and personal development. This belief holds that the interests of young offenders can best be served in school, where these children can obtain academic and social skills that will enable them to become good students and productive members of the community. Thus, schools need to provide a coordination and support structure for promoting the success of young people who have had contact with the juvenile justice system.

The successful transition of juvenile offenders from correctional systems back to

From the Administrator

The successful reintroduction of juvenile offenders from correctional facilities into the communities in which they live is fraught with challenges. It is, however, an essential process in which schools play a key role in ensuring the offender's chances for success and the classroom's status as a safe environment of learning. In fact, the transition that a juvenile offender makes from secure confinement to school will likely shape the youth's transition to the community.

In 1996, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and the Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program asked the National School Safety Center to identify strategies for enhancing services for youth out of the education mainstream.

This Bulletin, one of a series addressing issues related to that initiative, describes effective approaches to reintegrating youth from juvenile justice system settings into the education mainstream and provides information about promising programs, practices, and resources.

With help from all concerned, juvenile offenders can return to their communities to lead productive lives. I hope that the information this Bulletin contains will assist them in taking the first step—successful transition to school.

Shay Bilchik
Administrator

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school and community environments can be a difficult one. Juvenile detention and correctional facilities are designed to provide a structured environment with continuous supervision and a wide range of services (medical and mental health services, education, training, counseling, and recreation). Moving from this environment, with its personalized care and intense supervision, to the relatively less structured environment of mainstream education settings presents problems for both the youth and the educators involved in the process. For the most part, neither group is adequately prepared to address these problems.

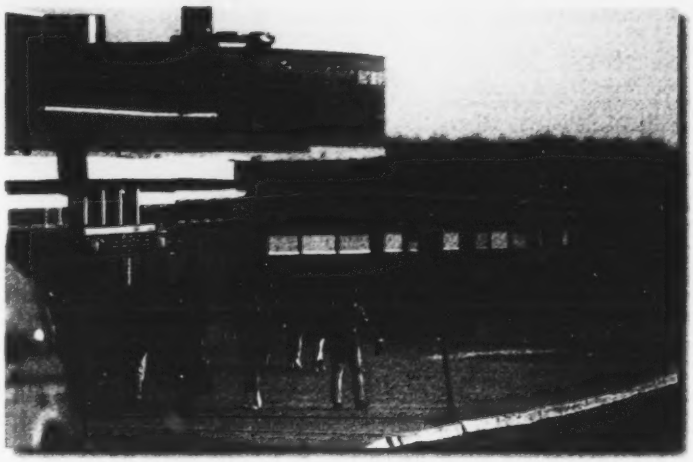
Young offenders making the transition back to school often are still affected by the social and personal influences that contributed to the conduct that placed them under the jurisdiction of the court in the first place. Such influences, or "risk factors," include delinquent peer groups, poor academic performance, high-crime neighborhoods, weak family attachments, lack of consistent discipline, and physical or sexual abuse.[1] A youth may also return to school with a variety of special service needs (such as individual counseling, drug rehabilitation, and family counseling) that are outside the scope of the mainstream education system.

Educators, including both teachers and administrators, face unique problems in helping young offenders make the transition back to school. The main problem often is a lack of complete information and documentation regarding these students' personal and scholastic histories, which makes it difficult to select appropriate educational placements for them. Educators must also deal with their own prejudices and fears regarding juvenile offenders—attitudes that may impede decisions about placement and services for individual juveniles and thereby hinder their successful reintegration into the school setting.

A Note About Prevention

Although reintegrating young offenders into the education mainstream is a major concern, emphasis should also be given to building prevention programs for young people before they begin a life of crime and violence. Communities must improve their ability to identify and address the risk factors that cause troubled youth and their families to drift away from mainstream education.

Many at-risk young people make the disastrous choice of dropping out of school or of behaving in ways that cause them to be abandoned by or pushed out of the school setting. Next to the family, school is perhaps the most formative influence in a child's life. Providing meaningful educational programs together with support systems and networks to assist young people in the learning process is essential.



Youth Out of the Education Mainstream Initiative

In 1996, the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) and the U.S. Department of Education's Safe and Drug-Free Schools Program asked the National School Safety Center to develop strategies for enhancing services to youth out of the education mainstream. The Youth Out of the Education Mainstream (YOEM) initiative drew attention to the needs of five often interrelated categories of at-risk youth: students fearful of attending school because of violence, truants, dropouts, suspended/expelled youth, and youth returning to school from correctional settings in the juvenile justice system. As a result of their separation from mainstream education, youth in these categories face many obstacles to becoming successful, socially responsible adults.

This Bulletin is one in a series designed to address issues associated with the five categories of youth identified by the YOEM initiative. Its purpose is to shed light on successful strategies for reintegrating youth from juvenile justice system settings into the education mainstream and to guide youth-serving professionals toward promising programs, practices, and resources.

Scope of the Problem

According to OJJDP's National Juvenile Court Data Archive, the Nation's juvenile courts processed 1,757,600 delinquency cases (cases involving juveniles charged with criminal law violations) in 1996.[2] Each case in this count represents one youth processed on a new referral during the calendar year. Although an individual youth may be involved in more than one case during the year, this figure can be used to estimate that as many as 6 percent of the Nation's school-age youth are processed through juvenile justice systems each school year. Juvenile offenders returning to school from out-of-home placement represent a relatively small percentage of this group of students, but managing and supporting system-involved juveniles, including those returning from out-of-home placement, are critical to the success of all students, the vast majority of whom have followed the rules and behaved as expected.

Impact of the Problem on Youth and Society

The lack of an education can make an enormous difference in a juvenile's life. Harold Hodgkinson, a demographer and education analyst, writes that dropping out of school as a youth is a factor closely related to being a prisoner as an adult. He estimates that States spend roughly $22,000 annually on each adult in prison.[3] Other researchers estimate that it costs as much as $35,000 to $60,000 per year to incarcerate

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one youth.[4] In contrast, the average cost to educate one student for 1 year is about $7,000.[5] It makes economic sense for communities to emphasize education over incarceration.

Although it is understood that not all juvenile crime can be prevented, it is clear that promoting the development of troubled young people into responsible citizens is in society's best interests. Juveniles struggling to make the transition from the juvenile justice system to school completion and the workforce must not be overlooked. Helping them successfully reconnect with the education mainstream is an essential first step. The challenge centers on how to make this process happen for the good of both the community and the young person.

Processing Cases Within the Juvenile Justice System

Before continuing this discussion about reintegrating juvenile offenders into school and community settings, a brief explanation of the juvenile justice process is in order.

After a juvenile is arrested, one of the first actions to be taken when processing the case is to decide whether the juvenile should be placed in secure detention. Juvenile detention is a process designed to ensure "the temporary and safe custody of juveniles who are accused of conduct subject to the jurisdiction of the court and who require a restricted environment for their own or the community's protection while pending legal action."[6] Juvenile detention serves to protect the community, protect the juvenile, and ensure that the juvenile will appear in court.

Although policies and practices vary among jurisdictions, the general procedure is as follows: Once the case has been reviewed, it can be dismissed, handled informally through a voluntary disposition (e.g., informal probation), or brought before a judge in a formal hearing. Generally, the judge can either refer the case to an adjudication hearing or conduct a waiver hearing, usually on motion of the prosecutor. Adjudication hearings in juvenile court decide whether the juvenile is responsible for an alleged delinquent act and are similar to the process of deciding whether a defendant is guilty or not guilty in criminal court. In waiver hearings, the juvenile court judge considers relinquishing jurisdiction over a matter and transferring the case to criminal court, where the juvenile will be tried as if he or she were an adult. The waiver decision is based on a variety of constitutional and statutory factors, including the severity of the offense, the age and prior record of the juvenile, and the juvenile's amenability to treatment.

After adjudication, a disposition hearing is held to determine what, if any, sanctions are to be imposed and whether the juvenile should be placed under court or correctional supervision. Court and correctional supervision may involve several measures: assignment to formal probation, placement outside the home in a residential facility, referral to a community-based program or service, or restitution or assignment to community service.

Although many of the programs and models discussed in this Bulletin have relevance for all youth who have come into contact with the juvenile justice system, the primary focus will be youth whose actions have caused them to be removed from the community and their schools, i.e., those who have been detained or incarcerated.

Information Sharing: The Foundation

Open lines of communication among all organizations involved with juvenile offenders are necessary to establish a comprehensive treatment approach for offenders and their families. Open communication can prevent replication of services or, worse, lack of services. The ultimate goal of information sharing is to avoid stereotyping or stigmatization of the juvenile offender and to increase the probability that he or she will successfully exit the juvenile justice system, avoid future contact with the system, and complete school and/or secure gainful employment.

Juvenile offenders and other high-risk youth encounter many problems that often require responses from numerous agencies. Such youth may require counseling (both individual and family). They may also have mandatory education requirements associated with the disposition of probation. Personal and family problems and needs can generate turmoil for youth, who may also become lost in a tangle of bureaucratic agencies that too often share only limited information with each other, resulting in fragmented assistance. In most cases, no single agency or advocate "looks after" the needs of an adjudicated youth. Although information about adjudicated youth and their families is usually well documented within the various agencies providing services, seldom does one agency maintain a portfolio documenting the complete range of services that have been and are being provided to the juvenile and the juvenile's family.

A prime example of inadequate information sharing is the situation that often arises when a student returns to school after detention or confinement. Educators must often guess about vital information missing from the student's file, such as information about treatment history, family problems, probationary status, or court-ordered mandates of aftercare services that influence schooling (e.g., attendance and behavior requirements). The time it takes to obtain all the information needed often leads to unnecessary referrals, duplicate services, inaccurate information, and service delays. Inefficiencies in information sharing complicate the reintegration of juvenile offenders into school settings, often hindering the education process or rendering it ineffective. It is the student who suffers the consequences of this highly inefficient system of information sharing.

There are a number of constraints on collaborative information sharing among youth-serving agencies. One such constraint, the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 (FERPA), also known as the Buckley Amendment, is often cited as the reason educators will not share information about students with other agencies. FERPA was enacted to assure parents and students that their privacy interests would be protected through standards for recordkeeping, thus discouraging unnecessary disclosure to any agency of a student's educational records.

Failure of an educational agency or institution to comply with FERPA can result in a loss of Federal funding to that agency. Many educational agencies have been overly cautious in their interpretation of FERPA by establishing policies recognizing a generalized right to privacy with regard to all student records and information. These policies often pose significant obstacles to information sharing among agencies.

In recent years, FERPA has been amended to promote information sharing between educators and juvenile justice system personnel. The Improving America's Schools Act (IASA) of 1994 (Public Law 103-382) permits information sharing (subject to State statute) between educators and juvenile justice system personnel on juveniles prior to adjudication. In addition, OJJDP's review of the FERPA statute and the current U.S. Department

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of Education (ED) regulation (34 CFR Part 99) have shown that FERPA need not stand in the way of effective interagency information agreements between schools and other agencies with whom they share a common interest.

Guidance on information sharing by and with schools in compliance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act is available from OJJDP or ED in *Sharing Information: A Guide to the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and Participation in Juvenile Justice Programs*, an indepth review of FERPA and its impact on information sharing; and in two related OJJDP Fact Sheet publications, which offer concise guidelines for information sharing.[7]

Individual State laws may impose some restrictions on information sharing. However, the Federal FERPA statute allows educational institutions to share information freely among themselves. If a correctional facility also includes an educational unit, the sharing of educational records would not be precluded by Federal law.

Theoretical Framework for Intensive Aftercare

The Intensive Aftercare Program (IAP) initiative, funded by OJJDP in 1988, created a sustained focus on solving the problem of community reintegration following the release of high-risk juvenile offenders from secure confinement. Researchers David Altschuler and Troy Armstrong developed the theoretical framework for this reintegration process. The framework emphasizes effective intervention based not only on intensive supervision and services but also on a process that focuses on reintegration during incarceration via a highly structured and gradual transition period to bridge the gap between institutionalization and aftercare. Elements of their formative work underscored the importance of preparing youth for progressively increased responsibility and freedom in the community, facilitating youth-community interaction and involvement, linking the offender with community support systems, and monitoring youth progress.[8]

After 7 years of research, development, and training, the IAP project established five competitively selected demonstration sites to test the model over a 5-year period: Denver, CO; Las Vegas, NV; Camden and Newark, NJ (which subsequently discontinued participation); and Norfolk, VA. The remaining sites are being independently evaluated through a grant to the National Council on Crime and Delinquency. A research preview released in December 1998 summarized some of the evaluation queries and early findings.[9]

Each demonstration test site has tailored the IAP model to its specific needs and local context. The IAP model is a descriptive, multifaceted, integrated approach designed to closely monitor juvenile offenders, enhance aftercare service delivery based on acknowledged risk and protective factors, forge working collaborations among diverse agencies and individuals, and reduce recidivism.

Among the elements critical to successfully translating IAP principles into practice are the following case management components:[10]

- Risk assessment and classification for establishing [program] eligibility.
- Individual case planning that incorporates a family and community perspective.
- A mix of intensive surveillance and services.
- A balance of incentives and graduated consequences coupled with the imposition of realistic, enforceable conditions.
- Service brokerage, with community resources linked to social networks.

The youth participating in the IAP demonstration sites are serious, habitual offenders in secure correctional confinement, and some are not likely to return to mainstream educational systems. Nevertheless, the theoretical approaches identified by the IAP model for reintegrating juvenile offenders into the community after confinement are suitable for the reintegration of juvenile offenders into transitional educational settings. In particular, the model's emphasis on providing youth with comprehensive, ongoing services and supervision, both while they are incarcerated and when they return to their communities, also applies to their transition from confinement to school settings.

Correctional Education: Preparation for Reintegration

Preparation for increased responsibility and successful reintegration into community life begins inside correctional institutions. Education has been a part of American prison systems since 1798. The most common finding of 20 years of research is that inmates who participate in education programs are more likely to be employed and less likely to end up back in prison than nonparticipants.[11]

Ideally, academic educational services should be the focus of detained and incarcerated youth's institutional experience. State constitutions guarantee all children the right to a free public education. Although educational services are offered to many juveniles in confinement, this is not always the case. In addition, many State education departments have not approved the institutional education programs, the programs often are not designed to address each student's individual educational needs, and students often cannot receive academic credit toward earning diplomas upon their transfer or release.

There have been efforts to upgrade programs to improve the quality of schooling for young people in confinement and to create educational service links between school systems and correctional settings. In 1992, OJJDP funded a 3-year grant project with the National Office for Social Responsibility (NOSR) to assist juvenile corrections administrators in planning and implementing programs to improve educational services for detained and incarcerated juvenile offenders. NOSR conducted an extensive literature search and published a report on effective practices in juvenile corrections education and a training and technical assistance manual.[12] NOSR also selected three State-operated juvenile correctional facilities to establish model learning environments for incarcerated youth. These sites were Adobe Mountain School in Arizona, Lookout Mountain Youth Center in Colorado, and Sauk Centre in Minnesota. Each site's vision encompassed the philosophy that learning is the most important component of the rehabilitative process and must be the centerpiece of each youth's institutional experience. The models sought to expand learning from the classroom into the entire fabric of the institution, to train and empower all institutional staff to teach, and to make learning enjoyable.

According to research by NOSR, effective educational programs within correctional facilities include not only basic academic skills, high school completion, and general educational development (GED) test preparation, but also special education, preemployment training, and other programs aimed at enhancing students' social, cognitive, and life skills.[13]

Special education. Learning disabilities have been identified as an important risk factor that contributes to failure in school and to entry into the juvenile justice system. An estimated 50 to 80 percent of all confined juveniles are eligible for services designed to address learning disabilities.[14] NOSR contends that correctional education must provide a full array of special education programs and services, including a trained staff, a curriculum that meets each student's needs, training for independent living and vocational skills, and linkage with pre- and postconfinement educational services.[15]

Preemployment training. While motivating juvenile offenders to return to mainstream education is a priority, correctional education must also focus on making the connection from education to the workplace. Not all juvenile offenders will pursue school completion. It is also important for detained or incarcerated youth to develop entry-level job skills and workplace competencies.

Life skills. Delinquents often lack social and communication skills, particularly those related to problem solving and moral reasoning. Juvenile correctional education should offer programs and curriculums that focus on the development of life skills and provide the opportunity for juveniles to practice and apply the skills they learn. These programs should incorporate skills such as goal setting, time and plan management, problem solving, and conflict resolution; should reflect real world needs, such as thinking creatively and working in teams to achieve common goals; and should help youth develop positive personal qualities, such as responsibility, dependability, and honesty.

Jackson-Hinds County Youth Detention School

The Jackson (MS) Public School District is committed to providing a quality interim educational program that will allow juveniles to achieve their potential while being detained in the Jackson-Hinds County Youth Detention Center. The Youth Court School is an extension of the Jackson Public School District alternative school. Students ages 10 to 17 served by this program include juvenile delinquents, law violators, runaways, and disruptive students.

Program components include assessment, basic academic and survival skills, vocational training, support services, and parent training. The school has intensive collaboration with Jackson State University, Alcorn State University, the Art Alliance of Jackson, and the New Hope Foundation, which all assist with implementation of the Youth Court School mission. The program also requires parents to attend an 8-week Systematic Training for Effective Parenting course.

Police officers bring juveniles to the Jackson-Hinds County Youth Detention Center, where they are booked and detained until they can see an intake counselor. The intake counselor determines whether the juveniles are detained or released. If juveniles remain longer than 3 days, they receive an educational assessment that includes intake, diagnostic evaluation, and the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE). Depending on TABE results, juveniles are placed in either a home school, general educational development (GED) test preparation, or special education track.

The program teaches basic skills such as reading, math, and English. Alcorn State University provides vocational training, and Jackson State University assists with support services such as social workers, counselors, and social work interns. After juveniles are released from detention, social work interns conduct extensive followup. If juveniles do not attend school after release, they are required to attend either GED classes at the Jackson Public Schools GED/ABE Center or a community program in the city of Jackson.

Many participants have received GED diplomas or have developed skills that enabled them to make the transition back into regular school. After receiving a GED diploma or graduating from high school, many participants have attended Hinds Community College.

For more information about the Youth Detention School, contact Dr. Ginger M. Smith, Director, Jackson-Hinds County Youth Detention School, 400 East Silas Brown Street, Jackson, MS 39225; 601–960–1700.

Transitional Support for Leaving Confinement

After confinement, juveniles' experiences and training within correctional settings must be linked to their experience within their communities. Transitional services provide this link. Effective transitional programs increase the likelihood of reenrollment in school, graduation from high school, and successful employment. The lack of such services may undo the often significant progress made by juveniles while they were incarcerated. Successful transition between correctional facility and school requires integrated and coordinated prerelease strategies developed and implemented collaboratively by all agencies involved in providing both institutional and aftercare services to youth and their families.

An important reason for coordinating transition services is to avoid problems that arise from inadequate information sharing between correctional facilities and schools. As mentioned earlier in this Bulletin, juvenile offenders often arrive at school settings without any scholastic documentation from correctional facilities. There may be delays in forwarding correctional school records to the receiving school. When received, information may be unconfirmed, undocumented, outdated, or tainted by personal prejudices and interpretation. School personnel may have to rely on personal contacts for information. The process of obtaining the needed information is daunting, involving time-consuming phone calls to previous institutions and encounters with individuals who often refuse to disseminate information (frequently citing confidentiality laws) or who can provide only sketchy accounts based on memory alone. These problems impede the timeliness and quality of educational program development for youth who are making the transition from correctional facility to school.

OJJDP's training and technical assistance programs stress the importance of interagency information sharing in the coordination of services. Training programs include:

- The School Administrators for Effective Police, Prosecution, and Probation Operations Leading to Improved Children and Youth Services Program (SAFE Policy), a week-long course directed at reducing juvenile violence in schools. The course stresses the importance of interagency agreements for information sharing and coordination of juvenile services.

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- The Chief Executive Course, an intensive 1-day orientation for local executives of public and private agencies. The course emphasizes information sharing as a method for improving the juvenile justice system.
- The Serious Habitual Offender Comprehensive Action Program (SHOCAP), presented as a module in the SAFE Policy and Chief Executive Training programs and also available in a 40-hour course designed to assist SHOCAP jurisdictions in developing their own unique interagency information sharing agreements. The course requires the participation of policy-level officials from law enforcement, schools, juvenile detention and corrections, prosecution, and social services.

These courses have modules on laws and policies that impact information sharing and on techniques to maximize information sharing. Sample State legislation, consent policies, and judicial orders are also available to course participants.

In addition, OJJDP can provide direct technical assistance upon request to individual jurisdictions working on improving their information sharing. To learn more about training and technical assistance related to information sharing, contact the Training and Technical Assistance Division, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, Office of Justice Programs, U.S. Department of Justice, 810 7th Street NW., Washington DC 20531; 202–307–5940.

Most effective strategies for helping juvenile offenders make the transition into the school and community include some formalized system of communication among the corrections staff and community social institutions—schools, mental health agencies, alcohol and drug treatment centers, and employment training and placement agencies, among others. The following model uses a formal interagency partnership established to address the needs of adjudicated youth and juvenile parolees.

Cluster Group Model: The New Jersey Gateway Academy

The Gateway Academy uses a cluster group model to manage information and coordinate services for juvenile offenders and their families. The cluster group comprises various service agencies (e.g., educational,

Law-Related Education

Law-related education trains young people to think critically, solve problems, and understand legal rights and responsibilities. It also demonstrates the role of citizens in mitigating violence. It involves instruction about rules, laws, and the legal system. Students explore and reflect on their own and others' perspectives, express and defend their views, listen to the views of others, develop arguments for both sides of an issue, mediate, and formulate decisions and resolutions based on multiple and often conflicting concerns. The purpose is to train students for responsible citizenship. An additional purpose in juvenile justice or transitional educational placements is to help stop juvenile offenders from engaging in delinquent activity.

Street Law, Inc., is a nonprofit organization dedicated to empowering people through law-related education. Participants in Street Law programs learn substantive information about law, democracy, and human rights through strategies that promote problem solving, critical thinking, cooperative learning, improved communication skills, and the ability to participate effectively in society. Formerly called the National Institute for Citizen Education in the Law, the program began at Georgetown University Law Center more than 20 years ago, when law students developed a practical law course that was taught in Washington, DC, public schools. Georgetown Law Center's Street Law Program continues to operate in the District of Columbia.

Street Law, Inc., provides programs, materials, and services to students in kindergarten through 12th grade and young people in community-based settings and juvenile justice settings. Key programs include:

- The Street Law Program—a high school practical law elective class available in every State. Many classes are taught in cooperation with local law students. All classes make extensive use of legal resource persons such as judges, lawyers, law students, and law enforcement personnel.
- Teens, Crime, and the Community—a partnership program with the National Crime Prevention Council featuring a curriculum designed to help young people avoid becoming victims of crime.
- Street Law/Juvenile Justice—lessons for use in detention settings and in juvenile court alternative programs, including diversion.
- Teen Parents and the Law—a carefully developed and field-tested adolescent parenting program.
- Human Rights U.S.A.—a national education effort designed to raise awareness of human rights issues among American citizens. The focus is on community groups and students.
- Supreme Court Summer Institute for High School Teachers—a 5-day, teacher education program focusing on the history and processes of the Supreme Court as well as significant current cases, taught each summer in Washington, DC, at the U.S. Supreme Court.

Street Law also offers a new curriculum infusing conflict resolution skills with lessons concerning community violence. The curriculum is being piloted in the Save Our Streets (SOS) program in Washington, DC. Youth ages 13 to 17 who have been charged with weapons offenses are referred to the program by the Superior Court of the District of Columbia, Social Services Division, Family Branch. SOS serves as a pre-adjudication service for these youth, most of whom have been released to the custody of their parents. Students participating in SOS have ongoing court cases throughout their participation. Each lesson within the SOS program is designed to examine laws and issues that affect participating students and the community; discuss information on available community resources and how to use these resources to benefit participants, other youth, and the community; and provide opportunities to build conflict resolution skills. The lessons are taught by using law-related education's interactive strategies with a strong focus on student skill development.

For more information on Street Law, Inc., write Street Law, Inc., 1600 K Street NW., #602, Washington, DC 20006; phone 202–293–0088; or visit www.streetlaw.org.

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mental health, probation, and child protection) assembled to benefit and support each individual youth. The group meets on a regular basis to share information and to ensure that needed services are provided without replication. A school representative (a principal, social worker, counselor, or homeroom teacher) typically serves as the chairperson of the cluster group; all information governing a juvenile is disseminated through the chairperson to other cluster members. As a result, all cluster members have access to needed information, avoiding a piecemeal approach to collecting information. As additional agencies or other interventions are needed, the appropriate services can be arranged, and duplication of services can be avoided.

For youth currently incarcerated or in residential placement, the cluster should be formed in time to establish communication with the school system prior to the youth's release. Major issues to be identified and addressed by the cluster group include adjudication, conditions of probation, academic level and educational placement, therapy needs, and method of followup.

New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission: Transitional Services

In addition to the partnership formed with the Newark Public Schools, the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (NJJJC) is involved in providing transitional services to students returning from NJJJC to other schools and communities throughout the State. Some of these services include the following:

- NJJJC reviews and evaluates every student's educational record and consults with school district representatives to ensure that the most appropriate educational program has been identified for the returning student.
- NJJJC develops an educational aftercare plan to meet the individual needs and goals of the returning student and provides ongoing evaluation of the student's progress.
- A transitional specialist from NJJJC follows implementation of each released youth's education plan and provides followup services to the student or education agency as required.
- NJJJC transitional specialists are also involved in special projects, including apprenticeships, school-to-career partnerships, entrepreneurial programs, career exploration and employability skill training, and mentoring.

For more information about NJJJC transitional services, contact Robert V. Coté, Jr., Executive Manager, Office of Education, New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission, 9 Quakerbridge Plaza, 3rd Floor, P.O. Box 108, Trenton, NJ 08625–0108; 609–631–4743.

The Gateway Academy is a partnership established between the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission (NJJJC) and Newark Public Schools (NPS). The partnership was formed as a direct result of the support provided by the YOEM initiative. Prior to YOEM efforts, NJJJC and NPS had functioned as independent entities, with no formal effort made to work as a team. Agencies exchanged educational records when students moved from one system to the other, but no personal contact or followup occurred. NPS recognized the importance of improving the flow of information between the school district and other educational providers working with the district's students. The Newark YOEM Conference, conducted through the collaborative efforts of the National School Safety Center and NJJJC, helped formalize NPS's desire to facilitate this exchange of information. Following the conference, NPS invited a representative of NJJJC to become a working member of its attendance improvement committee.

The attendance improvement committee found that a large number of students were "getting lost" in the transition from NJJJC programs back to Newark schools. The committee also recognized that students involved with NJJJC had special needs that should be addressed in greater depth. The Save Newark's Youth Task Force was organized to focus on these issues and needs. The task force included representatives from NJJJC, probation, the juvenile courts, Newark police, community service providers, and members of the community.

Over several months, the task force conducted an assessment of the needs of NJJJC/Newark students. It identified poor collaboration among service agencies as a major obstacle to the successful transition of students from NJJJC programs to the public schools. To overcome this problem, representatives from each social service agency agreed to serve as members of a multidisciplinary panel. Panel members are selected according to the needs of individual students to participate in a cluster group formed specifically to support each student. NPS serves as the umbrella agency under which all the service agencies work.

The task force also determined that a special program should be developed to serve students returning to the community from incarceration. The Gateway Academy, which was planned under the direction of the task force, opened in spring 1999. The Gateway Academy is a 12-month program designed to provide "one-stop service" for all Newark students who are returning from incarceration to the public schools. The centrally located facility houses the various service agencies working with this population of students, including parole, probation, and mental health and social service agencies providing drug and family counseling and employment training and placement. Academy staff are trained to provide a sound educational program that will address the special needs of students returning from NJJJC.

Student transcripts and needs are assessed by a team of personnel from NJJJC. This team determines the most appropriate educational setting for the student, whether it is the Gateway Academy or another school within the Newark Public School District. Regardless of educational placement, these students are associated with and receive services at the Gateway Academy. Each student is encouraged to be involved in afterschool activities, community service projects, and Saturday activities sponsored by the Academy. Students placed at the Academy complete the Academy's 12-month program and then return to their regular schools to complete their high school education and graduate.

For more information about the Gateway Academy, contact Jennifer Mitchell, Gateway Academy, 131 13th Avenue, Newark, NJ 07102; 973–733–7067.

Transitional Educational Placements

Although some juvenile parolees may eventually perform well in mainstream classrooms, it is often difficult for these youth to succeed in traditional campuses

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immediately following release from incarceration. "Cold turkey" reentry into public schools is often a formula for failure. Juveniles attempting such reentry typically say that they feel lost or overwhelmed on large traditional campuses. Also, the level of structure and attention that adjudicated youth receive in correctional and residential settings is limited on traditional campuses. This change in structure and attention often contributes to disruptive behavior by these youth when they return to school.

Alternative schools or transitional education centers are known as transitional educational placements. These placements are interim steps for youth who have been released from incarceration. Such placements offer appropriate environments that gradually reduce the level of supervision and support from that which these youth were accustomed to receiving in the correctional setting. In a transitional educational placement, recently released juvenile parolees can undergo careful assessment and take part in learning experiences that prepare them to return to mainstream classrooms. An alternative school or transitional education center also reduces the risk of a youth's getting lost in "the system" without needed support services.

Transitional Support and Placement: The Kentucky Experience

Kentucky Youth Assistance Alliance. More than 3 years ago, an alliance was formed among several Kentucky youth-serving organizations interested in easing the transition of adjudicated youth from juvenile justice settings, including secure treatment facilities, to educational settings. Included in the partnership were Christian County, Henderson County, and Jefferson County public schools; three State agencies (the Office of Juvenile Justice, the Cabinet for Human Resources, and the Kentucky Department of Education); the University of Kentucky; and the Kentucky Coalition for State Agency Children.

The first priority of the partnership was to collect data on school-age adjudicated youth in Kentucky. The partnership found that the school systems were losing nearly 95 percent of such youth because the youth failed to make successful transitions into a mainstream school or transitional educational center (also known as an alternative school). The partnership also found that existing efforts to help adjudicated youth in these counties were flawed by problems in identifying the target population and by inconsistent school reentry processes, gaps in services, and lack of community support.

Two years ago, the partnership became involved in the YOEM initiative. The project's application for YOEM assistance proposed a model that would address the gaps in services to Kentucky's adjudicated youth. The model set forth the following objectives:

- Establish a uniform system by which youth in juvenile justice or treatment facilities can return to a school setting.
- Create a bridge coordinator position in each school district to facilitate the return of adjudicated youth to school enrollment. The bridge coordinator screens each returning student, conducts transition interviews, collects appropriate data, and obtains parental releases for juvenile record sharing.
- Design an "educational passport"—a form of documentation that accompanies the returning juvenile to his or her subsequent educational placements—to facilitate information sharing across jurisdictions for returning students, including notification of schools regarding the impending releases of juveniles from treatment facilities or incarceration.
- Recruit and train mentors for each returning student.
- Monitor progress of returning students to further assess their needs and identify barriers to successful reentry.
- Provide alcohol/drug prevention education and other counseling and prevention support to youth and their families.
- Offer support groups for juveniles who have witnessed violence, particularly domestic violence. (Approximately 60 percent of adjudicated youth had a history of domestic violence in their families.)

The original alliance is no longer in existence, but the approach it established is successfully addressing many of the issues and problems associated with successful reentry for juvenile offenders. The bridge coordinator and educational passport concepts are part of "transitional school" initiatives undertaken in the three counties that participated in the alliance.

Franklin Transitional High School. In August 1999, the Franklin Transitional High School, Louisville, KY, opened its doors for the 1999–2000 school year. The school was established specifically to address the needs of students returning from adjudicated residential placement. Its design was the result of a collaborative effort involving the Jefferson County Public Schools' Safe and Drug-Free Schools Unit, the State's Department of Juvenile Justice, and Seven Counties Services (the State mental health authority for the region).

Franklin Transitional High School currently has approximately 40 students enrolled. The ratio of staff to students is very high (the school currently employs 20 staff members). Students come directly from incarceration to the school. A bridge coordinator team, rather than a single coordinator, screens returning students. The length of time students stay at the school is based on their individual needs. The goal is to prepare students for other educational placements, but students can actually graduate from the transition school if that is what it takes to complete their secondary education. Documentation in the form of an educational passport helps determine each student's educational and treatment needs and accompanies the student to his or her subsequent educational placements. Representatives from the Institute of Families, a private agency, provide counseling services to students and their families.

For more information about transition activities in Jefferson County, contact Pam Carter, Assessment Coordinator, Jefferson County Public Schools, Safe and Drug-Free Schools, 911 South Brook Street, Location #895, Louisville, KY 40203; phone 502–485–3260; e-mail pcarter1@jefferson.k12.ky.us; or Dr. Rick Tatum, Principal, Franklin Transitional High School, 1800 Arlington Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206; phone 502–485–6678; fax 502–485–6680.

An alternative school facility should provide the least restrictive environment appropriate for a juvenile exiting a correctional institution or other residential placement. The smaller pupil-teacher ratio, individualization, and therapeutic family approach available in transitional educational placements can provide these juveniles with a fresh start and can ease their transition into a school environment.

New Jersey's Gateway Academy, described above as an example of the cluster group approach to transitional services, is also an example of a transitional educational placement. Another example is Arizona's Pathfinder Project.

The Pathfinder Project

Created by Alan Wright, former education superintendent of the Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, the Pathfinder Project provided transitional educational placement for troubled youth in Arizona. After 7 years of intensive reform efforts, Arizona established a research-based and accredited alternative school that emphasized performance-based accountability through its curriculum. The Pathfinder Project targeted disruptive, delinquent adolescents, enrolled them in "Success School," and used a curriculum that provided a continuum of educational experiences. The Pathfinder Project was recently discontinued in Arizona, but the Pathfinder model continues to offer an alternative to traditional methods of dealing with disruptive students.

In the Pathfinder model, the purpose of Success School is to recognize and serve system-involved youth who have little or no hope for the future and who do not believe they can achieve personal success within the traditional educational system. Success School teaches troubled youth a leadership style focused on personal development and lifelong learning for community-based stewardship. Students learn responsibility and thus are empowered to achieve success. Behavioral changes observed in Arizona's Success School participants provide evidence that, when fully implemented, the program can help students gain literacy skills at accelerated rates and can increase their commitment to learning.

A key component of the Pathfinder model is the transition to a mainstream school environment. In Arizona, students who were properly prepared through the Pathfinder model were likely to be successful in making such a transition. Following transition, many Success School students chose to engage in work-study, which maximized their independence and community service.

The Success School approach can be implemented in any public school system, either as a "school within a school" or as a contracted partnership operated separately from a mainstream school. Arizona operated both approaches of Success School. Each of the approaches creates a continuum between the "regular" public school classroom and the specialized Success School classroom.

For more information about the Pathfinder Project, contact Leonard Lindstrom, Program Administrator, Arizona Department of Juvenile Corrections, 1624 West Adams, Phoenix, AZ 85007; phone 602–255–5259; fax 602–255–5265.

School Enrollment

Many students leaving incarceration do not have access to specialized transitional educational placements and must reenter the school environment immediately after their release. It is unfortunate for a student to have to attempt this difficult reentry without help. Many steps can be taken to avoid this.[16]

Curriculum coordination. It is extremely difficult for any student to enter classes during the middle of a semester and to succeed academically without prior exposure to the curriculum. Therefore, it is worth the time and effort to make certain that the curriculum within the institution is individualized to parallel that of the student's mainstream school while complying with the State's educational guidelines for graduation.

Prerelease information sharing. Placement considerations and discussions with the receiving school should begin long before the student is scheduled to depart from the facility. Juvenile justice system officials should share information with the school about the student's therapeutic service needs, academic functioning and achievement, and future educational needs and goals and about aftercare conditions that the school will be asked to assist in monitoring (e.g., compliance with school attendance, behavior, or therapy attendance requirements). In addition, juvenile justice system officials should indicate how they will assist the school to help monitor and enforce attendance, achievement, and behavioral standards.

Prerelease visit. A key factor in easing the reintegration process is a prerelease visit by the student (accompanied by the appropriate juvenile justice system official) to the receiving school. The student should be transported to the school and meet with the principal and other staff members. Classroom placement and curricular needs can be discussed at this time. (An effective approach matches the student's learning style with the receiving teachers' instructional styles. The visit is also an excellent time to introduce the student to the selected teachers.)

This advance visit establishes first impressions for both the student and the school personnel and can help both parties become more comfortable with each other. A well-planned visit can allay school personnel's fears associated with a juvenile offender reentering the mainstream school, especially if the youth arrives at the meeting well-groomed and behaves in a polite and nonthreatening manner.

The Family

The impact of the family on the academic and emotional well-being of a juvenile is crucial. If the family is dysfunctional, the risk for student recidivism is significantly greater. In short, progress achieved during confinement or at school can be reversed in the home. Receiving schools must assist in educating parents and helping families obtain necessary services. Periodic family "checkups" should be a requisite of working with former juvenile offenders. Checkups should include meetings at least once every 6 months among all agencies providing services to a student and family to ensure service and therapy followthrough.

Admission interview. The admission interview, conducted with reentering students and their parents, is an essential part of the reintegration process. The interview can elicit valuable information about the student: likes and dislikes; self-perception; student- and parent-identified academic and vocational goals; relationships with friends, family, and authority figures; past experience with the legal system; adjudication status; mental health concerns and treatment; and individual strengths and weaknesses. The interviewer(s) can also observe who "controls" the family--a parent or the juvenile. Evidence that the juvenile has control indicates a problem in the family. Steps can then be taken to provide family counseling. The admission interview also provides an opportunity for school staff to discuss relevant policies and rules with reentering students and their parents (see below).

Transitional counseling. An individual who has been released from a residential setting or an incarceration facility will require ongoing contact with staff from the discharging facility for followup after placement. Juvenile offenders often experience feelings of abandonment in new settings. A phone call or a visit from a staff counselor during the first 2 weeks of the transition can ease the student's discomfort until rapport with new staff and peers has developed. Institutional staff should maintain contact with the youth for up to 6 months after release, helping the youth to transfer positive skills and behaviors acquired in the old institutional setting to the new community setting.

Policies and rules. Any "zero-tolerance" policies governing day-to-day administration of discipline in the school must be explained to parents and students during an admission interview. Such policies give both youth and their parents important information on accepted behaviors and disciplinary measures while removing discretionary options from school administrators and law enforcement, thus reducing the possibility of unfairness in administering discipline. For instance, a policy might state that disciplinary measures for acts of violence such as fights, threats, or bullying will be met with consistent, swift consequences for each individual and that bringing a weapon to the school campus will result in criminal charges and a 1-year expulsion. This firearms policy is consistent with the Federal Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994.[17] Other zero-tolerance policies may address codes of conduct, gang affiliation, dress code violations, and contraband.

An effective way to communicate school policies is through a student/parent handbook. During the admission interview, staff members can divide the topics covered in the handbook and discuss the topics. For example, the assistant principal can clarify behavior rules and the dress code, while the homeroom teacher or counselor can explain academic performance expectations. The combination of both a written and verbal explanation of school policies can ensure understanding and encourage compliance.

Students and parents should be required to sign a statement acknowledging that they have received a copy of the handbook and agreeing that they are accountable for following school policies. This signed statement can be useful if students or parents should ever deny knowledge of policies in the future. The school district's attorney should review and approve the exact wording of the acknowledgment statement.

Violence elimination contract. A strategy similar to the acknowledgment statement is the use of a violence elimination contract that emphasizes the zero-tolerance policy for weapons and violence. The school principal guides the student and parents through the contract, which clearly explains that weapons and violence will not be tolerated. The principal, student, and parents all enter into the contract, which also makes clear the roles of each and establishes a team process for working with the student. The student becomes aware of the united efforts of school officials, parents, the courts, and police officers to handle disruptions on the school campus. The violence elimination contract may also call for a mandatory meeting with school officials to work out a resolution if the student is involved in a conflict or violent situation on campus.

Another benefit of the violence elimination contract is parental accountability. Parents are asked to regularly observe their children and help ensure that contraband or weapons are not brought to school. Parents are also reminded of their responsibility to teach their children about gun safety and are asked to keep any weapons they own under lock and key. Finally, students and parents agree to attend conflict resolution sessions with trained school mediation personnel if the student is involved in a violent situation. Attendance at these sessions can teach parents how to use the same skills with their children at home that professionals use at school.

Plans and curriculum. An important step in the enrollment and reintegration process is the establishment of academic, behavioral, and vocational goals and objectives. If the student requires special education, an Individual Education Plan must be completed. If the student does not qualify for

Gangs

Involvement with gangs appears to be common with many juvenile offenders. Juveniles leaving incarceration often transfer the terminology, clothing style, handsigns, and graffiti associated with gang affiliation from the institution into the school setting. Whether these juveniles are actual members of a gang or "wannabe" members, the gang influence is nevertheless a reality. Schools can become breeding grounds for gang rivalries and gang "ranking" (recruiting and initiating new members). Young people searching for identity often fall prey to the tantalizing notion of gang membership. Gangs can seriously undermine the effectiveness of reintegration services and educational programs attempting to assist the former juvenile offender. Schools must pay particular attention to providing positive alternatives for vulnerable juveniles to diminish the allure of gang membership. School administrators should keep in mind that, while they can do little to prevent students from joining gangs and participating in gang activities off campus, they can seek to eliminate gang activity and its detrimental effects on campus.

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When a Delinquent Offender Returns to School

Preenrollment Strategies

- Contact Probation or Parole Department.
- Review juvenile records.
- Clearly communicate expectations.

Welcoming Procedures

- Review student/parent handbook.
- Develop and discuss Individual Behavior Plan.
- Create behavior contract that is signed by the student and parents.

Placement

- Use vertical counseling, i.e., assign one counselor to the student throughout the student's tenure at school.
- Carefully select classroom teachers.
- Recruit a trained adult mentor.
- Prepare classroom (e.g., ensure communication capability in the event of an emergency; remove objects that are potential weapons).

Staff Preparation

- Develop and implement a crisis plan.
- Train staff in nonviolent conflict resolution.
- Share relevant information with teachers and staff members.

Classroom Management

- Share relevant information and observations concerning the student among teachers and staff, keeping in mind that minor incidents may be significant.
- Carefully monitor the student's behavior, including relationships with others, task behavior, tardiness, and attendance.

Supervision Outside the Classroom

- Provide responsible supervision in lunchroom, library, and halls.
- Assign the student a locker in a well-supervised area.
- Carefully select and monitor the student's participation in extracurricular activities.

Support Services

- Make appropriate referrals to outside agencies.

Interagency Collaboration

- Work closely with the presiding juvenile judge and probation department.
- Provide office space on campus for the probation officer.
- Create joint power agreement for sharing resources and juvenile records.

Remember: There are no insignificant violations of school or probation rules when it comes to students who are delinquent offenders. Any violations, threats, or assaults must be taken seriously.

special education services, a similar plan, called an Individual Service Plan, can be prepared. Both plans specify academic and behavioral goals and objectives for the student. The use of these documents, which provide a foundation for programming and evaluation, is essential in developing a student's map for success.

The course of study offered juvenile offenders must address the needs of the student and the needs of the community. Problem-solving skills, anger control, social skills, role identification, goal-setting skills, and conflict resolution are important concepts to include in their educational programming, along with the traditional curriculum of reading, writing, and mathematics. Vocational skills should also be considered, depending on the age of the student.

The Mentor's Role

Mentoring is often touted as one of the most cost-effective solutions to juvenile delinquency and recidivism. Mentoring programs engage community advocates and volunteer mentors who are assigned to work with delinquent or at-risk youth and their families. Mentors can help create links from corrections to schools and the community. In some cases, mentors help monitor youth's compliance with conditions of parole.

Public/Private Ventures conducted a nationwide study[16] on the impact of mentoring and found that adult mentoring as a strategy for supporting at-risk youth does work, particularly when the program is carefully supervised and supported by rigorous standards and trained personnel. Research provides evidence of resilient children who emerge from childhoods of poverty, abuse, neglect, and delinquency to become emotionally whole, capable adults. One of the documented protective factors that contributes to resiliency is the presence of a source of support outside the family. Mentors can be that source of support. A caring mentor can appropriately reflect and validate the youth's feelings, help with problems, and, at times, offer considered advice. Mentors frequently are the means by which young people learn of positive opportunities outside their communities.

OJJDP's Juvenile Mentoring Program (JUMP), established in 1992 through an amendment to the Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention Act of 1974, awards grants to local governments or nonprofit organizations that partner with local education agencies to pilot programs in which adults mentor high-risk and court-involved youth. OJJDP currently sponsors 170 JUMP sites in 42 States. While each mentoring program under JUMP must adhere to some basic requirements, grantees use a variety of program designs. Some programs emphasize tutoring and academics, while others emphasize vocational counseling and job skills. The varied mentoring programs share three goals: improving academic performance, reducing school dropout rates, and preventing delinquent behavior. All sites are required to coordinate their activities with local schools. OJJDP's 1997 Bulletin, *Mentoring—A Proven Delinquency Prevention Strategy*,[17] describes early efforts under the JUMP program and also summarizes the Public/Private Ventures evaluation of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America program. OJJDP's 1998 JUMP Report to Congress[18] indicates that youth involved in mentoring programs are less likely to

experiment with drugs, less likely to be physically aggressive, and less likely to skip school than those not involved in such programs.

Central to any mentoring program is the concept of "the match." The goal is the formation of a relationship that will ultimately benefit the juvenile. Programs that recruit mentors hastily are doomed to failure. The mentoring process is a complex interaction. As with all human relationships, there are risks and potential trouble spots that must be acknowledged. Volunteers need to be realistically prepared for the hard work of relationship building and the potential discouragement such efforts can bring.

Key to the success of the match between a mentor and a young person is providing mentors with appropriate training and support. The Public/Private Ventures study found that effective programs provide mentors with training that includes communication skills development, tips on relationship building, and recommendations for ways to interact with young people. In addition, many of the Big Brothers/Big Sisters of America programs evaluated by Public/Private Ventures provided volunteer education and development programs that included training in values clarification, child development, and problem solving.

Partners Against Crime

Detroit's Partners Against Crime (PAC) mentoring program offers one approach to the problem of repeat juvenile crime that plagues urban centers across the Nation. The PAC program matches an adjudicated young offender with a community volunteer who has been screened and trained.[3] Through PAC training, volunteers become well versed in the five characteristics PAC has determined to be pillars for successful mentoring: friendship, regular contact, listening, tapping resources, and reporting.

Friendship. Volunteer mentors build friendships with juveniles during weekly meetings. Often just sitting and talking with a young person for a long period of time is difficult. Building a friendship almost always needs to include an activity: visiting at a PAC chapter, going for a walk, attending a movie or sports event, window-shopping, playing a game, or having a soft drink and a hamburger. When mentors show that they care, that they are willing to give freely of their experience and time, and that they accept the mentored youth "as they are," friendships are inevitable.

Regular contact. All volunteers enter PAC with high expectations; however, without regular one-to-one contact, there will be little or no effect. Close mentoring friendships result from meeting face-to-face with consistency and continuity.

Listening. The most frequent need among young people today is for someone willing to listen to them. Mentored youth need to know that someone outside their own immediate family or peer group cares enough to listen. PAC volunteers build healthy mentoring relationships by being good listeners.

Tapping resources. The ability of juvenile offenders to fit into community life and to mature into productive citizens can be strengthened through contact with mentors who help smooth the way. Volunteers often know about networks of people who can assist mentored youth. Once needs are identified, PAC volunteers pursue possible avenues for meeting those needs. Volunteers often attend to very basic needs, such as providing food for youth and their families. Finding resources can mean getting a youth involved in a recreation program, making arrangements for a tutor, or providing guidance through the maze of college financial aid applications. Dedicated mentors almost always find ways of filling a youth's needs through personal or community resources.

Reporting. Certainly one of the least popular tasks among PAC volunteers is reporting. Often volunteers initially perceive no relation between paperwork and successful mentoring. While certainly not the object of mentoring, the reports are essential to relieving mentored youth of their most compelling problem: being under court jurisdiction. Volunteers can accurately report to the supervising probation officer, referee, or judge that the probationer is complying with the court's conditions related to PAC participation. Such accountability helps the court to verify compliance. To be truly successful, PAC volunteers must spend the time required each month to complete reports.

In 1995, Wayne State University in Detroit, MI, conducted an impact evaluation of the PAC program. The evaluation findings indicate that recidivism was 38 percent lower for PAC clients compared with a control group and more than 50 percent lower for PAC clients compared with probationers who declined to participate in PAC.

The results of the PAC program in Detroit continue to be impressive. Young boys and girls who might otherwise see a probation officer once or twice during probation instead see a mentor an average of 50 hours during the same time period. Youth who appeared to be caught in a downward spiral have found new hope. They are improving in school, are better able to cope with family situations, and are staying out of further trouble. The PAC program is a success because volunteer mentors from the community take the time to demonstrate that they care and want to make a difference in the life of an adjudicated youth.

For more information about PAC, contact Mr. Kim G. Frentz, Program Director, Partners Against Crime, 163 Madison Avenue, Suite 120, Detroit, MI 48226; 313–964–1110.

School-Based Probation

Establishing partnerships between juvenile probation departments and schools is another innovative approach to effective intervention with young offenders, including juveniles on probation and, in jurisdictions where probation departments also serve youth returning from incarceration, juveniles on parole. The uniting of schools and probation departments has been successful in communities and counties across the United States, including Allentown, PA; Jefferson, IN; Norfolk, VA; and Fresno, Kern, Yuba, and Monterey Counties, CA.

Educators and juvenile probation officers share a common goal: helping young people acquire knowledge and develop skills that lead to positive and productive lifestyles. As officials of the juvenile court, school-based probation officers provide control, supervision, and incentives that delinquent youth often need to attend school regularly and comply with school rules and regulations. School-based probation officers can also intervene in crisis situations involving juvenile probation clients and can assist schools in handling disruptive behavior by clients. Schools can contribute to probation objectives by providing student probationers with a structured environment for learning basic life skills and by designing an academic program tailored to the juvenile's individual needs.

School-based probation officers may perform a variety of specific functions:

- Notifying the school of a student's conditions of probation or parole and any special educational or therapeutic needs that should be addressed through school programming.

Sentenced To Serve—Personalized Learning Under Supervision (STS PLUS)

STS PLUS is a Minnesota program designed for delinquent youth who have experienced educational and vocational deficiencies and who are under the supervision of the court. The STS PLUS coordinator, school counselor, and probation officer create a personalized plan to help the client complete educational and vocational goals. Participating youth receive significant incentives: school credit is given for community service projects, and a portion of the court-ordered community work service is pardoned when the participant follows the personalized educational plan. Youth also receive rehabilitation service referrals and counseling as needed.

STS PLUS community service is performed in small groups (eight students or fewer) under the direction of a trained crew leader. Participants select worksites from a list of proposals submitted by public agencies and nonprofit organizations around the county; about half of the worksites involve environmental tasks, such as removing garbage, painting over graffiti, and planting trees. The Minnesota Department of Corrections operates the STS PLUS work crews and provides the trained crew leaders. Juvenile STS PLUS crews work Monday through Friday during the summer months and on weekends during the school year.

STS PLUS goals are as follows: increase life skills, improve school performance, enhance decisionmaking skills, assist youth in developing long-term goals to facilitate success, reconnect the offender to the community, provide a way for the offender to make amends to the community, and reduce delinquency.

Program funding sources include the Minnesota Department of Corrections; the Minnesota Department of Children, Family and Learning; Carver County Court Services; and the Carver-Scott Educational Cooperative.

Program evaluation findings include the following: STS PLUS reduces patterns of delinquent behavior (there is a 4-percent recidivism rate among participants); the program motivates youth to achieve educational, vocational, and individual goals and improves their attitudes about school, law-abiding behavior, and the community; participants learn important life skills such as how to set positive long- and short-term goals; participants are highly satisfied with the program; and STS PLUS is a cost-effective approach that can provide significant financial benefit to the community.

For more information about STS PLUS, contact Jerome Kleis, Juvenile STS PLUS Crew Leader, Carver County Court Services, 600 E. 4th Street, Chaska, MN 55318; 612–496–8920.

- Monitoring the attendance, school performance, and behavior of youth on probation or parole or undergoing informal behavioral adjustment.
- Conducting home visits and coordinating intervention services that must be obtained for students and families from sources outside the school system.
- Coordinating reentry conferences for students returning to school following placement in a juvenile justice facility.
- Providing services to minors who are not wards of the State but were referred to probation for a variety of reasons (including minor offenses, school discipline and behavior problems, and family difficulties).
- Counseling young people in danger of being expelled due to truancy problems.

The Allentown Model

The practice of physically placing full-time juvenile probation officers on school campuses was first put into effect by Lehigh County Juvenile Probation and the Allentown School District in Pennsylvania.[22] The goal of the program was to strengthen collaboration between the school district and the probation department toward meeting their common objectives. By creating a mutual understanding of each other's duties, functions, and limitations, the two agencies enhanced their ability to coordinate services for juveniles and their families.

The Allentown model uses a dual case management system for student probation clients. Juveniles are assigned two probation officers: a school-based officer, who develops treatment plans and handles day-to-day monitoring of the student's behavior, and a court-based officer, who attends all court proceedings and handles other out-of-school probation functions relative to that student. The school-based probation officers spend the majority of their time on campus.

The primary goal of probation officers is to provide guidance by helping juvenile probationers avoid situations that may lead them into further involvement with the juvenile justice system. Improving the school performance of student probationers is a key objective for achieving that goal. To monitor improvement, the two agencies must share relevant information with each other. The probation officer needs to be aware of the prior academic functioning of the student. The school needs to know about special education or treatment needs that can be addressed through district services.

At the inception of the Allentown program, juvenile record sharing was a major concern for both the school district and the probation department. The confidentiality of sensitive information needed to be preserved to avoid labeling or otherwise stigmatizing juveniles. These issues were worked out in a formal information-sharing agreement, which bases release of records on each agency's legitimate need to know.

In addition to specifying information-sharing arrangements, written agreements between the school district and probation department also outline funding arrangements and reporting structures and identify exactly what is expected of each of the parties involved. (Funding arrangements vary. For example, a school and a probation department may jointly pay the salaries of the officers involved, or one agency may provide the entire funding while the other furnishes office space and equipment.)

In developing a school-based juvenile probation program, precautions must be taken to ensure that the initiative is not actually creating additional referrals to and/or increasing involvement of youth with the justice system. To guard against this possibility, school-based probation officers should work only with youth already on juvenile probation and should not serve as general disciplinarians for

Probation/School Liaison Program

In this Norfolk, VA, program, seven probation/school liaison counselors work 8 hours per day every school day monitoring attendance, behavior, and academic performance of court-supervised youth in middle and high school. The counselors receive training in their liaison function. They also participate in disciplinary hearings and serve as a bridge between school personnel and probation officers.

The purpose of the program is to provide a Norfolk Court Services Unit presence in the schools so the probation officers responsible for students on probation or parole can be immediately aware when these students are truant or are experiencing other types of problems. Approximately 800 students participate in the program during each school year.

The probation/school liaison counselors receive office space, telephone access, and other support from the schools to which they are assigned. Norfolk Public Schools also provides administrative support that includes payroll and other billing functions.

During its 3 years of operation, the program has improved school attendance, behavior, and academic performance of court-supervised youth.

For more information about the Probation/School Liaison Program, contact Leslie Arnold, Probation/School Liaison Program, 800 East City Hall Avenue, P.O. Box 1357, Norfolk, VA 23501; 757–441–2811.

the student body. The Allentown model requires that school-based probation be reserved for youth within the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. School-based officers may also work with student parolees, either alone or in concert with parole/aftercare staff.

Remaining Problems

Several challenges continue to face schools and communities as they attempt to deal with problems of crime and violence among youth:

- In addition to helping to reintegrate young people who are already in trouble and outside the education mainstream, educators and other concerned members of the community need to redouble their efforts to prevent the youngest children from taking a similar path. In the wake of recent school shootings, the public has exerted increasing pressure on school officials to identify at-risk youngsters as early as possible so that appropriate intervention services can be provided. In attempting to respond to public demands, school officials are hindered by the fact that human behavior is not often predictable, particularly when a troubled individual may display few outward signs.
- Overcrowding in juvenile detention and correctional facilities often means that, before another youth can be detained or confined, officials must decide who will be released in order to make room for the new resident. Many times the youth being released are not fully prepared for reintegration into mainstream schools and society. These youth and their families may need additional or enhanced services to help support them through the transition.
- Educators sometimes have unfounded fears and prejudices regarding juvenile offenders. Preparing educators to work with these youth is essential. The preservice curriculum in university-level teacher preparation programs should equip young teachers with the skills and knowledge they need to work with the full spectrum of students, including those who have had contact with the juvenile justice system. At the school level, open lines of communication and well-trained, informed teachers can make the crucial difference in reintegrating juvenile offenders into mainstream education.
- Lack of coordination and collaboration among schools, juvenile justice systems, and community social institutions has been a serious impediment to the development and delivery of effective aftercare programming for juvenile offenders.[23] Petty turf battles, power struggles, and refusal to share information must give way to a spirit of cooperation and teamwork to better serve the needs of troubled youth and their families. This call for unity has been made before but has often gone unheeded because of funding limitations, community resistance, competition for resources, or lack of leadership.

Conclusions

The move from the closely monitored environment in a secure facility to less structured life in the community can be overwhelming to the juvenile offender. Youth reentering public school systems from custodial settings frequently are alienated from the formal education process. Without help, they may drop out of school

An Essential Ingredient

A story is told about Calvin Coolidge, the 30th President of the United States:

President Coolidge and Mrs. Coolidge were staying at the Willard Hotel in Washington, DC, during the President's first days in office. One night, the President awoke to discover a burglar in the room, going through the President's belongings and attempting to remove a wallet and pocket watch. The President said, "I really wish you wouldn't take that," referring to the watch. He asked the burglar to read the engraving on the watch, which said: "Presented to Calvin Coolidge, President of the Massachusetts Senate."

Coolidge then identified himself as the newly sworn-in President of the United States, persuaded the burglar to relinquish the wallet and watch, and then engaged the young man in quiet conversation. The burglar explained that he and his roommate were unable to pay their hotel bill or purchase their train tickets back to their college campus.

To the young man's amazement, Mr. Coolidge gave him $32 from the wallet, as a loan, and then advised him to leave the room as unconventionally as he had entered, to avoid detection by the Secret Service.

The President chose to show compassion, but he did not want it publicly known that he had been so forgiving. After all, he was a "law-and-order" politician. The story did not become public knowledge for many years.

This story is not specifically about wayward youth returning to school from incarceration, but it does illustrate an essential ingredient of the process: compassion on the part of adults who are charged with shaping the lives of young people and helping them achieve responsible citizenship.

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or be expelled for exhibiting inappropriate behaviors. These high-risk youth cannot be expected to succeed in a vacuum. Young people, particularly troubled young people, need structure, supervision, and support. Schools and community agencies should seek to improve their capacity to respond effectively to the needs of these troubled youth.

A number of significant and innovative programs and strategies have been developed for helping delinquent youth reenter the education mainstream. Foremost is the trend toward improving communication among all of the agencies and other entities involved in helping these youth develop and achieve positive goals. Communities must forge partnerships among public and private youth-serving agencies to provide a continuum of treatment and aftercare services for juvenile offenders and their families.

Educational services provided to juvenile offenders, both within juvenile correctional facilities and outside in the community schools, must reflect current educational philosophy, curriculum content development, and instructional techniques. Instruction must be relevant to these students' interests and needs and must allow them to make connections to real-life situations. These students can profit from challenging tasks that allow them to develop problem-solving skills. They also need job skills training to prepare them for future employment. With the full support of their schools and communities, they can make the transition back to school and build a future as responsible and successful adults.

Endnotes

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